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Contact: Dan Reeves (916) 319-2045

***California State Legislature Sends Governor Bill
to Create Parks in Underserved Communities***

SACRAMENTO— The California Legislature today approved and sent to the Governor Assistant Majority Leader Kevin de León's (D-Los Angeles) Assembly Bill 31, which would prioritize \$400 million of Proposition 84 park funds, the largest investment in local parks in the nation, to underserved and park-poor communities throughout California.

In 2006, California voters approved Proposition 84, which included an appropriation of \$400 million dollars for park funds for underserved communities. Over the past two years, Assistant Majority Leader Kevin de León sought to ensure that those funds were prioritized for communities in highest need of park funds throughout California.

"AB 31 is the very first bill I introduced, and I'm proud that with its passage today, from Lodi to Los Angeles, from San Francisco to the Sierras, park-poor communities throughout California will benefit from these park funds," said Assistant Majority Leader de León. "I strongly urge Californians statewide to contact the Governor and urge that he sign AB 31 into law."

Cities across the United States suffer from limited park access, however California's park deficiencies are stark in comparison. Based on acres per person, Los Angeles (11.8 acres) has about a third of the park space of New York City (37.3 acres), and has far less than Chicago (18.7 acres), Boston (18 acres), or even Philadelphia (17.1 acres). These disparities are even more prevalent in lower-income and ethnic neighborhoods. In example, studies show that generally white Los Angeles neighborhoods have 31.8 acres of park space for every 1,000 people, compared with 1.7 acres in African-American neighborhoods, 0.6 acres in Latino neighborhoods, and 0.3 acres in Asian-Pacific Islander neighborhoods.

If signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger, AB 31 would establish a competitive grants program, to be administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), targeting \$400 million of Proposition 84 park funds to underserved communities statewide suffering from significant park and economic poverty—largely communities of color, suffering from higher rates of crime, unemployment, poverty, school drop-outs, and health ailments, such as obesity and asthma. According to health studies, providing people with green space and places to play has broad cumulative impacts on communities.

"Rural, urban, and suburban neighborhoods across California have even less than one acre of parkland per 1,000 residents. AB 31 would target funds to those areas in highest need, so our kids can finally have a safe place to play."

AB 31 was sent to the Governor with support from over 80 organizations and governments across California. The bill currently sits on the Governor's desk and is pending approval.

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